DC
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GUILLEM MARCH
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RIDDLE ME THIS

PART ONE

BLACK MAGIC TRICKS

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assistant editor JANELLE SIEGEL editor MIKE MARTS
BATMAN created by BOB KANE

I GOTCHA, TIGER!
TOLD YA NOT TO WORRY!
UP HERE, CONFIDENCE IS HIS FRIEND.
AND UP HERE, I'M STILL HIS *MOTHER*. I'LL WORRY ALL I WANT.
ESPECIALLY SINCE HE'LL NEVER FILL THOSE BIG OL' BOOTS *BRUCE* USED TO WEAR.
MOM?
NOT WITH THOSE LITTLE FEET, HUH, *DARLING?*
CATWOMAN? WHAT IS THIS--?
THIS IS JUST YOUR SCREWED-UP LIFE. WHAT'S THE MATTER?
TOO MUCH FOR YOU TO HANDLE ALONE?
FATHER!

JASON?
YOU'RE TRYING TO BE HIM, HUH, KID? TRYING TO BE TOUGHER THAN YOU REALLY ARE. TRYING TO PROVE YOU'RE AS GOOD, OR MAYBE BETTER?
LOOK WHAT GOOD IT DID ME! HAHAHA!
GET AWAY FROM ME!
DON'T LISTEN TO HIM, DICK. HE'S ALWAYS BEEN JEALOUS OF YOU.
ORACLE... HELP ME GET DOWN!
I THINK YOUR BATMAN IS PRETTY GOOD. IT'S THE DICK GRAYSON PART THAT'S IRKING ME THESE DAYS.
YOU'VE CHANGED. AND I DON'T KNOW IF WE CAN BE FRIENDS ANYMORE.
WAIT! I DIDN'T MEAN TO HURT YOU! ORACLE!
BRUCE?!
CATCH ME!
BRUUUUUUUGE!

NoOOOo!
HUH-HUH-HUH-HUH-HUH--
ANOTHER NIGHT TERROR, MASTER RICHARD?
~GRN~ STUPID TOXINS. HOW LONG BEFORE THEY'RE COMPLETELY OUT OF MY SYSTEM?
WITH HUGO STRANGE'S CONCOCTIONS, THERE'S NO WAY TO BE CERTAIN.
BUT YOU'VE IMPROVED TENFOLD FROM THURSDAY EVENING, WHICH I THINK IS ENCOURAGING.
AND I'VE BROUGHT YOU A DETOX TEA TO HELP CLEANSE YOUR SYSTEM.
THANKS, ALFRED.
BUT SIR? YOU MAY WISH TO TAKE YOUR TEA DOWNSTAIRS AFTER YOU GET DRESSED.
GREAT. SOME WONDERFUL NEWS WAITING FOR ME DOWN THERE, I BET. WHAT'S UP?
COMMISSIONER GORDON LEFT AN URGENT MESSAGE CONCERNING A HOMICIDE IN CRIME ALLEY. HE MENTIONED A PUZZLING LINK TO MR. ZSASZ...
OH...
CLINK TINKLE
WONDERFUL.

NAME WAS *LAZLO RANKIN.* JUST RELEASED FROM BLACKGATE PRISON YESTERDAY AFTERNOON.
YOU PUT HIM AWAY ABOUT THREE YEARS AGO--FOR ATTEMPTED MURDER.
I'LL REFER TO MY CASE BOOK.
HE SHOT MAYOR HADY'S LIMO DRIVER. TOOK AN EYE. LAZLO HERE CLAIMED HE WAS TRYING TO RUN HIM DOWN...
WHERE'S THE DRIVER NOW?
FOUND FLOATING FACEDOWN IN THE RIVER A FEW DAYS AFTER THE SHOOTING. WIFE SAYS IT WAS SUICIDE.
JUST LIKE *THIS* BRAND OF SUICIDE MOST LIKELY.
SO? DO YOU FIND THIS AS ODD AS I DO?
I DO. THE ETCHINGS CERTAINLY RESEMBLE ZSASZ'S SELF-MUTILATED TALLY.
BUT THESE WOUNDS WERE MADE POST-MORTEM. NOT MR. ZSASZ'S M.O.
WALKS LIKE A DUCK--

--LOOKS LIKE A DUCK. BUT DOESN'T QUACK QUACK QUACK LIKE A DUCK.
RIDDLER.
I GO BY EDWARD NIGMA THESE DAYS, OLD FRIEND. YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT.
THIS IS A CRIME SCENE. STATE YOUR BUSINESS OR LEAVE.
OWIE. NO NEED TO BE SO HARSH. I COME TO OFFER YOU AND YOUR OH-SO-LOYAL POLICE PALS SOME MUCH-NEEDED ASSISTANCE.
WE DON'T NEED IT.
THEN THE GREAT DETECTIVE HAS ALREADY SURMISED THAT THIS IS THE WORK OF A COPY CAT SERIAL KILLER?
MR. NIGMA, ONE MURDER DOESN'T MAKE FOR A COPYCAT, OR A SERIAL KILLER.
OF COURSE, OF COOUUURSE, EX-ACT-LY MY POINT!
MEET ME AT THE COUNTY MORGUE AND WE'LL BUTT--ER, PUT OUR HEADS TOGETHER.
CHOP-CHOP, THE BODIES ARE ONLY GETTING COLDER!

GENTLEMEN, I THINK YOU'LL FIND THAT THE STRANGE CIRCUMSTANCES FROM TONIGHT'S HOMICIDE DRAW AN *EERIE COINCIDENCE* TO THE VICTIM I'M ABOUT TO SHOW YOU.
COUNTY MORGUE
I'M TALKING ABOUT *RODNEY BARTS.* HE WORKED FOR THE FALCONES A GOOD TEN YEARS AGO AS THE ROMAN'S TOP LEGAL CONSULTANT.
THEY DO HAVE ONE THING IN COMMON, NIGMA...
HE WAS RECENTLY PAROLED FROM BLACKGATE, AS WELL. A FINANCIAL GURU THAT THE FALCONES AND OTHERS SOUGHT OUT FOR "ADVICE."
HIS BODY LOOKS LIKE IT WAS SCAVENGED BY *BIRDS.* WHAT'S ON THE CORONER'S REPORT, COMMISSIONER?
"TOXICOLOGY IS TAKING THEIR SWEET TIME AS USUAL, BUT WE BELIEVE HE WAS *POISONED.*"
THAT'S THE HALLMARK OF A *MOB HIT,* COMMISSIONER.
CPD LINE · DO NOT CROSS
THERE'S DEFINITELY LESS DRAMATIC WAYS TO DISPOSE OF A BODY, KATE.

WHAT DO YOU SAY? THE FALCONES ARE BACK IN TOWN--THIS CAN'T BE A COINCIDENCE...
I'VE HAD THE ENTIRE FAMILY UNDER SURVEILLANCE FOR WEEKS NOW.
WE'LL HAVE TO REVIEW THE TAPES TO SEE IF ANYTHING POINTS TO BARTS.
PARDON MY INTERRUPTION, COMMISSIONER, D.A. SPENCER... I SEE YOU'VE BEATEN ME TO THE SOURCE.
AND WHAT SOURCE ARE YOU REFERRING TO, NIGMA?
THE ONE RESPONSIBLE FOR LEAVING A TRAIL OF DEAD CROWS ACROSS 16TH STREET. AH, SEE? THERE'S ANOTHER ONE NOW.
I'LL TAKE A SWAB SAMPLE BACK TO THE LAB--AND HOPEFULLY IDENTIFY WHICH TYPE OF POISON WAS USED ON BARTS.
SAVE YOUR TIME, CAPED CRUSADER. I'VE ALREADY DONE MY OWN TESTING. RAT POISON. SIMPLE AND CRUDE.
BUT THEN, HIS DEATH WASN'T MEANT TO BE ANYTHING ELSE BUT FOR SHOW.
WHAT ARE YOU GOING ON ABOUT, RIDDLER?
FIRST, MR. ZSASZ AND NOW THE PENGUIN. BOTH, YOU CAN ARGUE, ARE REPRESENTED HERE IN STYLE.
BOTH MURDERS ARE UNCONVINCING ATTEMPTS TO THROW US OFF THE REAL KILLER... OR KILLERS.
THE QUESTION IS, WHERE DOES IT STOP? OR WHEN DID IT REALLY BEGIN?

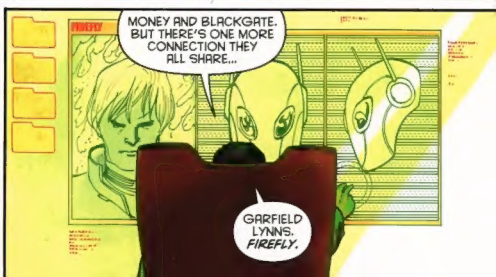
THE BATBUNKER.

Numbers. An equation that's adding up to something... but what?

Lazio Rankin worked for the Mayor in the finance department.

And Mr. Bart's was the Falcones' legal consultant. Translation: expert money launderer. Both victims were numbers guys.

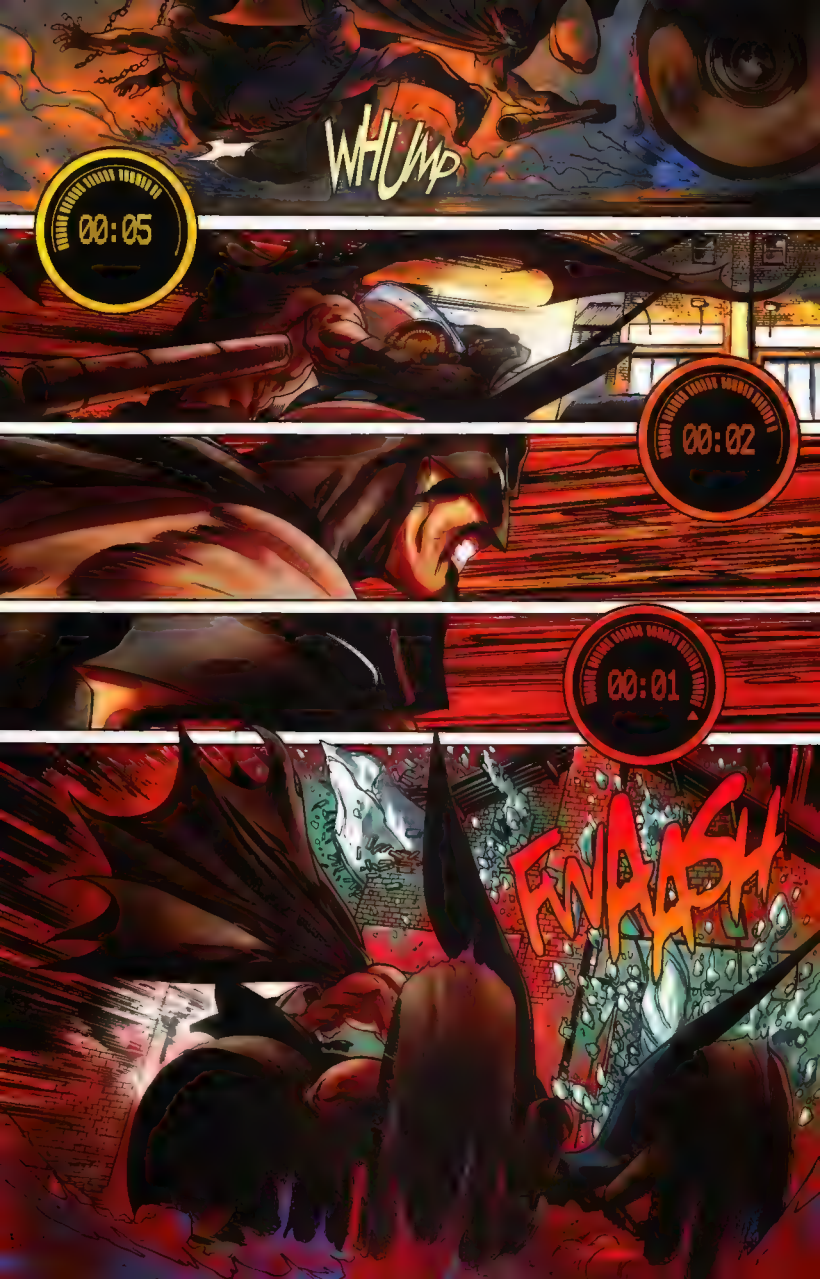
COULD IT BE JUST A STRANGE COINCIDENCE, MASTER RICHARD?



ARKHAM ASYLUM.
Finding Firefly is easy. Getting him to talk is always the challenge.
THEY WEREN'T FRIENDS OF MINE... WHAT'CHA THINK, THAT I BECOME BEST BUDS WITH EVERYONE I EVER MEET IN PRISON? OR HERE?
SOMEONE'S KILLED OFF THREE OF YOUR OLD FRIENDS. OR ROOMMATES, IF THAT'S MORE ACCURATE. I JUST WANT TO KNOW WHY.
HELL IF I KNOW. PEOPLE MAKE ENEMIES IN THIS TOWN. ANYWAY, IT'S NONE OF MY BUSINESS.
ESPECIALLY SINCE I DON'T SEE HOW IT HELPS ME OUT ANY. SMELL WHAT I'M SNIFFIN', BATMAN?
I WON'T CUT YOU ANY DEALS, LYNN. BUT TELLING ME WHO ELSE WAS INVOLVED IN WHATEVER BROUGHT THIS ON MIGHT SAVE A LIFE.
WHO KNOWS? MAYBE EVEN YOUR OWN.
D-DEEEEP D-DEEEEP
GORDON HERE.
ER, BATMAN? IT'S FOR YOU.
WHO IS THIS?
YOU HAVE FIVE MINUTES TO SAVE A LIFE. WILL YOU COME OUT IN A BLAZE OF GLORY OR WILL YOU LOSE YOUR COOL?
CLICK

00:16
It takes thirty seconds for Oracle to trace the phone signal.
It takes me all of five minutes to reach the warehouse behind the Colon Street Theater.
VROOOM
BATMAN! PLEASE HELP!
REOW!
SCREEEEECH
OH, THANK GOD YOU CAME!
She knew I was coming before she saw me. This isn't--
--right.
FWOOOSH
OH, BABY. YOU'RE TOO EASY!
00:11
CRASH
HE SAID THERE'S EXTRA IN IT IF WE BREAK SOME BONES.
HOW MUCH WE GET IF WE KILL HIM?

VROOOO


WHUMP
00:05
00:02
00:01
SMASH

EDDIE BLACKSMITH RAN A STRING OF CHOP-SHOPS AROUND GOTHAM. A HIGHLY ORGANIZED CRIMINAL ENTERPRISE WHICH TURNED STOLEN CAR PARTS INTO HARD CASH.
SMALL POTATOES, GORDON. I'M INTERESTED IN HIS PAST. ANYONE BIG?
I'M LOOKING INTO MR. FREEZE RIGHT NOW. THESE MURDERS HAVE TO BE MORE THAN SYMBOLIC GESTURES...
MAYBE THEY ARE. BUT SO FAR, THERE'VE BEEN NO DIRECT CONNECTIONS WITH THE VICTIMS AND THEIR STYLE OF MURDER.
WHOEVER'S KILLING THESE MEN ISN'T TRYING TO FOOL ANYONE. EXCEPT MAYBE ME.
THE PHONE CALL PROVES YOU'RE BEING WATCHED. COULD BE ONE OF MY OWN FOR ALL I KNOW.
PARDON ME--- STEP ASIDE, PLEASE.

HEY! WE HAVE A CRIME SCENE HERE...
AND YOU'LL HAVE PLENTY MORE AT THIS SNAIL'S PACE.
NIGMA, UNLESS YOU HAVE SOMETHING NEW--
OH, I DO, I DO. SOMETHING VERY NEW, YET VERY OLD AT THE SAME TIME. WHAT CAN IT BE, BATMAN?
MISSED CLUES, PERHAPS?
SPIT IT OUT.
THEY SAY KILLERS ALWAYS RETURN TO THE SCENE OF THE CRIME. IF YOU SUBSCRIBE TO THAT THEORY, THEN THESE PHOTOS I TOOK MAY INTRIGUE YOU...
A PICTURE'S WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS... BUT IN THIS CASE, THERE ARE THREE. ANYTHING JUMP OUT AT YOU, BATMAN?
ANYTHING... REPETITIVE?
He's not easy to miss. Top hat, waxed mustache... at three different crime scenes.

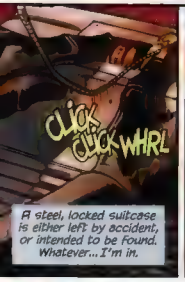
Alfred runs a facial profile on him. The Bat-computer identifies him as Sebastian Rothschild.
He's renting out a luxury condominium in one of Gotham's premier high-rises.
His only arrest was fifteen years ago in New York for breaking and entering. Served just three months of a three-year sentence.
Alfred has him moving to Paris, where he became a celebrity of sorts as a master illusionist. A magician.
MATCH
By then he'd also changed his name to Sebastian Blackspell.
The bodies, the elaborate crime scenes... illusions. Sleight of hand.
Tricks, designed to rope me in.
But why?

SKRRKKSH
Blood. And only a few hours old.
A struggle... someone seriously wounded and dragged...
...to the smoking gun.

The struggle tells me this wasn't planned.

Maybe the victim came here to confront Blackspell.

But why the elaborate death scene? Whose M.O. does this represent? It's like a carnival. Could it be his own?

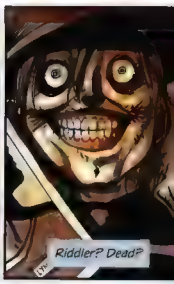


A steel, locked suitcase is either left by accident, or intended to be found. Whatever... I'm in.

Basically a signed confession here, Mr. Blackspell. These are photographs of the deceased. Some I recognize, and others...

I know well.

Garfield Lynns...?



Riddler? Dead?

How can that be? How...

Watching me...

BLACKSPELL!
That was too obvious. He wanted me to see him.
He was expecting me...
I'm getting the hang of his work.
YOU CAN STOP RUNNING NOW, SEBASTIAN.

But never where.
OKAY, MAGIC MAN--I'M PLAYING YOUR GAME.
SMACK
POOF
His escape route isn't random. He knows exactly where he's going.
CHICK CHICK

And me, too.
KMMMMMMMMM
Damn it. More games.
TOO LATE BATMAN
He's sick in the head. Especially if he thinks he can get away from me.
HAHAHAHAHA
I'm too close.
WHA--
HAHAHAHAHA

YOU?
HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA
Riddler...
to be continued!

DC HISTORY IN YOUR FUTURE!

It's been mentioned here before that **Len Wein** (ONLY the co-creator of much history in several universes! SWAMP THINGs and >snikts<, anyone?) has embarked on an ambitious project that will illustrate the working history of the entire DC Universe!

The project is DC UNIVERSE: LEGACIES, and it launches next month!

Also mentioned before are the contributions of some impressive legacies themselves - **Andy** and **Joe Kubert** - illustrating the first two issues' main segments, which show the birth of the Super Hero from Day One! And since we announced that coup, several other top talents have been added to the mix, so it's time for an update!

Each of the ten issues in this series will begin with two pages drawn by **Scott Kolins** (an awesome sample of which adorns this very page), setting the stage for the era the issue in hand will be covering! Then on to the main story, and after the Kuberts in issues #1 & #2, **Jose Luis Garcia-Lopez** takes over #3 & #4 to draw the dawn of the "silver age" of heroes in the DCU! And don't tell anyone... but **Dave Gibbons** is inking those two amazing issues as I type this report! Talk about Super Team-ups!!!

But wait...there's more!

Len's also written eight-page co-features that spotlight OTHER events of the times represented in each and every issue! So brace yourselves for **J.G. Jones's** Spectre & Doctor Fate! **J.H. Williams's** Seven Soldiers of Victory! **Dave Gibbons's** Sea Devils & Challengers of the Unknown! AND **Joe Kubert's** War Heroes reunited!

And that's only the first four issues! We'll stop back here periodically to fill you in on the rest of our talent lineup for this series, but suffice it to say: HOLY MOLEY!

The Original Universe is all here in DC UNIVERSE: LEGACIES!

—**Mike Carlin**

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they call us
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for we are many
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